



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 10, 2022

Division of Veterans' Services Honors Women Veterans for Women Veterans Day

Hosts Programs Highlighting Military Service of Women Veterans and Gender Minorities

The New York State's Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) will pay tribute to New York's Women Veterans over several days starting on Women Veterans Recognition Day on June 12 and spanning until June 14. DVS will host a series of events to recognize, honor, and empower veterans who identify as women and gender minorities.

Speakers and performers at [these programs](#) will represent the vast geography of New York State, as well as multiple branches and eras of military service, offering participants a well-rounded picture of the achievements of women and gender minority veterans. These programs will include a Ruck March led by the Outdoor RX Coalition and the Sierra Club, dramatic performances by Women Veterans Empowered and Thriving, a resource fair, and a roundtable discussion.

New York State is home to over 62,000 women veterans, making it the 9th largest women veterans population in the country. Women who serve also continue to be the fastest-growing demographic within the veterans' community and yet, resources and programs too often ignore this critical group of veterans. The programs being organized by DVS for this year's Women Veterans Recognition Day will create inclusive spaces, provide opportunities for women veterans to connect with fellow women who served, and will help connect more women veterans to the benefits, services, and community they deserve.

“Women Veterans Recognition Day calls our attention to those who served who have felt unseen and underappreciated by both their fellow veterans and their own communities,” **said Division of Veterans’ Services Director Viviana DeCohen.** “Women and gender minorities have served in our nation’s military since its founding. Whether acknowledged or not, they have and continue to serve our State and Nation with honor and distinction. Where they have been wronged in their military service for simply being who they are, New York State has stepped in to restore the honor of their service.”

DVS Deputy Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Kristen Rouse said, “Women and gender minorities who have served this State and Nation with pride, courage, and honor are too often left behind when we talk about recognizing veterans and delivering services for veterans and their families. Women Veterans Recognition Day focuses on acknowledging and honoring the tremendous contributions of these veterans going back to the founding of our nation, and to work toward closing gaps in serving their unique needs.”

Since its founding in 1945, DVS has remained dedicated to serving all those who have served their State and Nation through military service, and the agency is committed to ensuring women veterans across the state have access to their earned benefits. New York State has a designated Women Veterans Program Coordinator to provide tailored services and support to women who have served. DVS continues to engage with partners like the VA Center for Women Veterans and others in discussions about access to services, addressing and preventing gender-based harassment at VA facilities, and other issues impacting women veterans. Additionally, DVS has ongoing trainings for staff and statewide government partners to improve cultural competency and more effectively reach and serve women veterans statewide.

Additionally, since November 2020 DVS has been empowered by the Restoration of Honor Act to restore state veterans’ benefits eligibility to Veterans who wrongfully received a less-than-honorable administrative discharge on the basis of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of a service-related mental health

condition, including military sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. The Division has already granted favorable decisions in 35 Restoration of Honor Applications and looks forward to receiving more applications. Veterans living in New York can apply [here](#).

DVS maintains an agency-wide commitment to serving all Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families in a wide range of practice areas, including claims and appeals for benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, discharge upgrade appeals to the United States Department of Defense, and claims for New York State benefits. Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families are encouraged to contact the Division at 888.838.7697 or www.veterans.ny.gov to meet — in person or virtually — with an accredited Veterans Benefits Advisor to address their needs and gain the full measure of benefits that they have earned.

-###-